

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Aiza Khan and I live in New Haven, Connecticut. I am a graduate student at Yale University, School of Public Health. This past year, I volunteered with and was a chairperson for the Yale Patient Navigator Program.

I stand in support of HB 6616: An Act Concerning Expansion of Husky Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status.

The Yale Patient Navigator Program (YPNP) works with adult and pediatric patients referred by Primary Care Centers, the Refugee Clinic, and the Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS). While working with YPNP, I addressed barriers to care by connecting patients with health and psychosocial resources. My experience working with patients who were immigrants, undocumented, and/or refugees taught me that barriers to healthcare seriously and negatively impacts CT's growing and thriving workforce and productivity levels.

I worked with an individual who needed to leave their home because of uncontrollable war. This individual experienced inhumane and unspeakable conditions afterwards, jumping from country to country in hopes of finding a new home. The individual eventually found what they hoped as solace in CT.

This individual would constantly say, "I just want to get back to work". Getting back to work would allow them to live a productive life. However, the barriers to healthcare, lack of adequate insurance being a prominent one, prohibited them from getting the care they needed to get back to work. Imagine being forced out of your country, experiencing sufferable conditions and in that developing debilitating health conditions, finding a new home but being barred from living a healthy and secure life because of inaccessible healthcare.

As of 2018, there were nearly 60,000 U.S. citizens in CT that lived with at least one family member who was undocumented. 1 in 6 workers in CT were immigrants, making up essential parts of the state's labor force. Furthermore, undocumented immigrants in CT paid about \$335.4 million in federal taxes and \$197.4 million in state and local taxes. It is essential that these tax paying individuals receive access to government services that allow them to live healthy lives. With global manmade and natural catastrophes, more refugees are coming into the state. It's imperative that these individuals get access to healthcare, without an age cap, as these individuals will be contributing to the workforce that makes our state run.

I support HB 6616 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

With Gratitude,
Aiza Khan